

Winners of 2001 Air Force Club Membership Scholarships Announced Air Force Services Agency

For the fifth consecutive year, Air Force club membership is helping members and their families combat the costs of higher education. Three individuals were recently selected to receive a combined total of \$10,000 in scholarship money given away in the Air Force Club Membership Scholarship Program. Scholarships are provided through a sponsorship agreement with First USA Bank.

Club members and their families were given the opportunity to submit an essay on *Air Force Clubs—The Value and Rewards of Membership*. Two essays were chosen by each participating base to compete for the three Air Force awards. One hundred essays were chosen by Air Force installations to represent them in final competition. The 2001 prizewinners are:

- a. First Prize (\$5,000), First Lieutenant Timothy Cummings, stationed at Nellis AFB NV.
- b. Second Prize (\$3,000), Ms. Young Stinebiser, spouse of Master Sergeant Paul Stinebiser, stationed at Scott AFB IL.
- c. Third Prize (\$2,000), Staff Sergeant Stephen Parsons, stationed at Hanscom AFB MA.

"We appreciate everyone's participation in this year's program, the competition was keen. Like previous years, the essays submitted were outstanding and projected the value and rewards associated with club membership," said Frank Black, Chief of the Club Division, Air Force Services Agency. "The Air Force Scholarship Program is another benefit associated with club membership and focuses attention on, and increases awareness of, Air Force Club's value to the Air Force community's quality of life."

1st Place Essay

Air Force Clubs—The Value and Rewards of Membership
by First Lieutenant Timothy Cummings

The United States Air Force thrives upon fellowship. It has done so since its creation in September 1947. It embodies a fraternal spirit that extends back before even the existence of our nation. That spirit is based upon mankind's collective behavior in a military society. The value of membership cannot be quantified by mere dollars and cents. Value is derived from the esprit de corps, the unity, and the camaraderie each member shares in the social military fraternity. The reward is membership in a society infused with interminable customs, courtesies, and traditions. An Air Force Club member is part of an elite association of warriors.

The Air Force Club faces ceaseless assault by market competition. It is easy for the Air Force population to grow indifferent about the Club's offerings. It is just as easy to be swayed by a commercial market whose goal is purely materialistic. One guiding principle behind the Air Force Club is the principle of maintaining Air Force fellowship and tradition. Nation-wide

restaurant chains and social clubs care not about that institution. It is interesting that one of the largest demographics of the Air Force Club is the *retiree*. This is a testament to the retiree's ingrained warrior spirit and natural understanding of the Club's true reward and value. They visit the club because they remember those core values and time-honored traditions. They find those values in one another and they look for them in us.

Air Force members are smart consumers. While the club does provide one of the last bastions of fellowship in the Air Force, it also offers one of the best value-priced assets available to the military member. The Club provides cut-rate facilities for private and unit functions; it maintains state-of-the-art audio-visual and multi-media equipment for presentations; it caters parties and functions with some of the best chefs in the world; and it provides outstanding menus and entertainment for members and families. Additionally, the Club pays close attention to military needs, such as hosting dignitaries, addressing troops. The Club system provides us an environment to relax and flourish in an exclusive environment. It invites us all to gather and to foster leadership.

The Air Force Club is the bedrock of our Air Force heritage. It is the backbone of our military tradition. It is one item, besides the uniform itself, which all Air Force warriors have in common. It fuels the warrior spirit while it embraces the family. It is the one place, across the world an Air Force member can go and be at home. The open doors invite us to participate in fellowship and celebration. The club is here during tribulations in a changing world. It is a strong stable landing strip on a turbulent, ever-changing landscape. It is our valuable and rewarding Air Force Club.

Essayist's Biographical Notes: 1st Lt Timothy Cummings is a CCAF graduate with an associate's degree in Information System Management and in Information Systems. Lt Cummings also has a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and obtained a Master of Computer and Information Science degree with Thesis from Troy State University. He is currently enrolled full-time at the University of Phoenix, Las Vegas campus.

2nd Place Essay

Air Force Clubs—The Value and Rewards of Membership
by Ms. Young Stinebiser

Being a military dependent for over seven years now, has given me the opportunity to experience and utilize Air Force Clubs at several bases, and the service these clubs offered and the benefit they added to our quality of life can't be measured. We have definitely grown accustomed to the convenience and quality service they provide.

The Air Force has given my husband and me many opportunities most people aren't fortunate enough to experience. We have traveled extensively, and have learned and seen many different lands and cultures. This lifestyle doesn't come without adversity. Moving from place to place, and trying to get comfortable in new surroundings isn't always an easy task. We take so much

for granted as Americans that we often fail to recognize what's important to us until we don't have it. Air Force Clubs do so much to bring these things closer to us.

Of course food, entertainment, and financial services in a comfortable atmosphere and at affordable prices come to mind when we think of an AF Club, but the clubs are so much more than that. The cost of living in places like Japan and Hawaii often make it difficult or impossible to have much-needed nights out. "The Club" makes it possible to enjoy a night out without breaking the bank. My husband goes TDY often, and without The Clubs, traveling would be much more difficult. It seems he uses the club for one reason or another on a daily basis. Check cashing, dining in, take-out, and entertainment are a part of his survival when TDY. But, these are just a couple benefits that help paint the "big picture" AF Clubs' true worth.

AF Clubs are about camaraderie, cohesion, community, and family. Whether at Osan AB, Korea, or Scott AFB Illinois, the comfort and assurance that comes from knowing the person or family sitting next to you is a part of your extended family fosters the feeling of belonging and content. That's not always an easy task when you're thousands of miles from home. It's a gathering place for people with similar problems, experiences and lifestyle, and a place where you feel at home no matter what country or city you're in. It's a little peace of mind in the sometimes-stressful lifestyle of Air Force members and their families.

Essayist's Biographical Notes: Ms. Young Stinebiser is the wife of MSgt Paul Stinebiser. Ms. Stinebiser is working on her bachelor degree in Computer Information Systems and will be attending St. Louis University this fall.

3rd Place Essay

Air Force Clubs—The Value and Rewards of Membership
by SSgt Stephen Parsons

I sat long and thought hard about how I can define, explain, or illustrate the rewards of being a club member. Initially I hoped to touch on the plethora of programs and services offered through the clubs. Then, I realized I only have five hundred words or less to write this essay. So, I have decided to share my personal rewards of membership.

I have been a member of the clubs since 1987. I have celebrated promotions, retirements, marriages, holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, intramural sports championships, individual and unit accomplishments, and just making it through a tough week, to name a few, at a Services club. The clubs have provided me with a place to go to "hang out" with friends and co-workers, treat my wife to a nice dinner, and to attend formal gatherings of recognition and celebration. I have been inducted into the NCO Corps by the CMSAF, danced with my bride on our wedding night, and received my diploma from the Community College of the Air Force in either an Enlisted or Officer's Club. These are just a few of the memories I have of our clubs.

In today's society with the price of nearly everything on the rise, the club system is continually finding innovative ways to offer the military community a variety of entertainment options at an extremely reasonable fee. The catering service offered through the Hanscom Clubs saved my wife and I thousands of dollars in the planning and preparation of our wedding ceremony and reception. Not to mention the employees at the Patriot Enlisted Club ensured the night would be a memorable one, at no additional charge!

The most significant rewards the club system has to offer are the intangibles. It is not always about discounts, prizes and free buffets. The clubs offer its members an exclusive worldwide organization that is rich with history and abundant in pride. No matter where we may find ourselves in the world there is a club there to greet us with open arms and say, "Welcome friend, come on in hand have a seat." These organizations are committed to the military way of life and their community. The clubs don't care how much you earned last year or whether you are registered as Republican or Democrat. As long as you have served, are serving, or are family of those who have, you are welcome.

So, without downplaying or belittling any of the wonderful programs accessible through the club system, my personal rewards of membership are the unwavering dedication and professionalism of the club staff to the military community and the sense of being part of a family. The majority of my most memorable accomplishments have been celebrated at a USAF Services Club. Finally, there isn't a country club in the world that offers the level of commitment and service we receive from our Enlisted and Officer's Clubs!

Essayist's Biographical Notes: SSgt Stephan Parsons is currently an Air Force R.O.T.C. Cadet at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell (UML) pursuing a Graduate degree in Criminal Justice. He received his bachelor's of Science degree in Law Enforcement from Western New England College.